

## Agency FAQs

### 1. How do federal agencies use GSA Multiple Award Schedule (MAS)?

**Answer:** Federal agencies distribute a Request for Quote (RFQ) to enough Schedule contractors to receive a minimum of (3) three quotes. For more information on Schedules, please see [GSA Schedules](#).

### 2. What about FAR Section 803?

**Answer:** The Department of Defense (DoD) has implemented rules for ordering services over \$150K for multiple award contracts. The rules are derived from Section 803 of the National Defense Authorization Act for 2002. Section 803 requires the Contracting Officer (CO) to contact as many Schedule holders as practical, in order to ensure that at least three responses are received. If three responses are not received, the DoD CO must determine if no additional qualified contractors could be identified despite reasonable efforts to do so.

### 3. How do I place task orders through GSA?

**Answer:** The majority of ordering offices place task orders directly with the best value GSA MAS contractor (after quotes are received), and are responsible for administration of the task order. The contractor submits invoices directly to the ordering office. Agencies can also elect to utilize fee for service contracting support offered by GSA's Assisted Acquisition Services (AAS) if their order is above \$50M. AAS can accept funding documents and competitively procure professional services from Schedule contractors. Services might include preparing a performance-based SOW, conducting market research, developing and distributing an RFQ, evaluating quotes received, and issuing and administering the Schedule task order. For more information see the [MAS Desk Reference](#).

### 4. Can I issue a Request for Quote (RFQ) electronically?

**Answer:** Federal agencies can use [eBuy](#) to prepare and distribute RFQs. The agency will be able to review quotes submitted by Schedule contractors. The actual award of a task order must be completed outside of eBuy, unless the total dollar value of the task order is less than \$2.5K. An agency can choose to send the RFQ to the contractors in whatever manor it desires. Email is a common tool employed for this process if eBuy is not used.

### 5. Can I issue task orders electronically?

**Answer:** Yes, GSA eBuy is an online RFQ tool, which enables federal buyers and Schedule contractors to exchange RFQs and quotes electronically.

**6. Am I authorized to include FAR clauses on Schedule task orders?**

**Answer:** Yes, but the additional clause(s) cannot negate any existing term and condition of the Schedule contract. Agencies routinely add specific clauses about security, payment processes, extension process, and options.

**7. Can I issue Schedule task orders with option periods?**

**Answer:** Yes, Clause 52.217-9 needs to be included in any RFQ when an agency wants to use options on their task orders and 52.217-8 Option to Extend Services (Nov 1990) should be added to extend a task order. Prior to activating an extension or an option, confirm that the contractor is still on a GSA Schedule.

**8. Can I terminate a Schedule task order?**

**Answer:** Yes, you can terminate for cause or convenience. Please refer to clause 52.212-4, Contract Terms and Conditions in the solicitation.

**9. What mechanism does GSA use to ensure that contractors are accurately reporting their task orders?**

**Answer:** GSA has a staff of Industrial Operation Analysts (IOAs) who audit sales reported by Schedule contractors.

**10. Can I include incentives at the task order level?**

**Answer:** The solicitation specifically authorizes the use of incentives at the task order level. The text of clause I-FSS-60 Performance Incentives (April 2000) details this out.

**11. How do I handle ODCs at the task order level?**

**Answer:** For administrative convenience, non-contract items can be added to the BPA or the individual task order if the items are clearly labeled as such, applicable acquisition regulations have been followed, and price reasonableness has been determined for the items. Contractors are reimbursed only for incurred costs at or below the published “not to exceed” levels. Costs for transportation, lodging, meals, and incidental expenses incurred by contractor personnel on official company business are allowable subject to limitations contained in FAR 31.205-46, Travel Costs. It is GSA Policy not to allow a charge of profit or fee on reimbursable items.

**12. Can I use the Schedule to fill short-term and/or long-term agency staffing shortfalls?**

**Answer:** No. Short term requirements are filled utilizing Schedule 736, Temporary Administrative and Professional Services (limited to 240 days). Long term staffing shortfalls filled by contractor personnel are typically considered personal services and are held to FAR Part 37.104 requirements, like all other federal contracts.

**13. Can I order labor categories under the Schedule?**

**Answer:** GSA encourages customers to describe their needs in a performance-based SOW rather than to require labor categories that you think are needed to perform the work.

**14. What does "limited duration" mean?**

**Answer:** The effort needs to be limited to a defined task with a specific start and end date to the task. No Special Item Number (SIN) should be used to provide an ongoing requirement for an indefinite time period.

**15. Where can I get help on writing a performance-based SOW?**

**Answer:** For performance-based contracting regulations, samples, tutorials and guidance, see [Acquisition Overview](#). Additional sources include [SOWs](#) and [Services Ordering Solutions: Avoiding MAS Confusion](#).

**16. How can I refine my search to a manageable list of contractors?**

**Answer:** Go to [GSA Advantage!](#)<sup>®</sup> and follow these steps to refine your search results:

1) Type in keyword(s) in the box under "Refine" by keyword

2) Select "Refine"

You can also prepare a Request for Information (RFI) notice to solicit responses from Schedule contractors. You can post such a notice on eBuy or email it directly to contractors you see listed under the specific Schedule and SIN.

**17. How do I establish a multi-agency BPA?**

**Answer:** An agency can establish a BPA that covers multiple agencies. At the time the BPA is established, the CO must identify who can award task orders and delivery orders (TOs/DOs) against a BPA.

**18. Are there any training opportunities on Schedules?**

**Answer:** If your agency is looking for training on the Schedules program, there are two types you can get, and both are free. For general training on GSA eBuy and/or GSA *Advantage!*®, please contact the Customer Service Director (CSD) in your state. [CSDs](#)

For specific questions about GSA Schedules for professional services you may contact:  
[Maureen Duckworth](#), (253) 931-7514  
[Tammy Lindsley](#), (253) 931-7627

For more in-depth training on how to use GSA Schedules, please see the contacts below. The training is CLP-certified and can easily be tailored to your contracting office's specific needs.

Brad DeMers, [brad.demers@gsa.gov](mailto:brad.demers@gsa.gov), (253) 931-7196

If you have any questions, please call the National Customer Service Center (NCSC) at (800) 488-3111 or direct your email inquiries to the [MAS Helpdesk](#).

**19. What does the Maximum Order Threshold mean?**

**Answer:** Maximum Order Threshold (FAR 52.216-19) is meant to protect small contractors from very large orders that they may not be able to support. A small company has 3 days to reject an order (because the size is unreasonable for the company). Professional services are procured with a quote system and contractors will not quote if they do not want to win the award. The Maximum Order Threshold has no bearing on the size of a task order. There is no limit on the size of a task order.

**20. Is there a cost (fee) for using GSA Schedules?**

**Answer:** Yes, there is a cost built into the labor categories. The Industrial Funding Fee (IFF) is a fee paid by contractors to GSA to cover the cost of operating the Schedule program. The fee is .75% of sales (75 cents for every \$100) generated as a result of being on the Schedule, and is paid by each contractor to GSA on a quarterly basis. Government customers pay this fee when they purchase items from a Federal Supply Schedule contractor. The fee is included in the price of the item and is not a separate line item; therefore, the award prices or discounts that appear in contractors' GSA price lists already include the fee.

Frequently Asked Question about the Industrial Funding Fee are noted below.

**A. What is the Industrial Funding Fee (IFF)?**

**Answer:** The IFF is a fee paid by customers to cover GSA's cost of operating the Federal Supply Schedules program. The fee is a percentage of reported sales under Schedules contracts.

**B. Do customers pay the IFF in addition to the price listed by the MAS contractor?**

**Answer:** No. The IFF is already included in the price of the item because GSA negotiated the fee into the contract price before the award was made.

**C. Do all MAS contracts include the IFF clause?**

**Answer:** The IFF requirement was introduced to Multiple Award Schedule contracts in April of 1995. It is currently included in all Federal Supply Schedule contracts as 552.238-74, Industrial Funding Fee and Sales Reporting (July 2003)

**D. How do customers pay the IFF?**

**Answer:** The IFF is included in the price customer agencies pay the contractor when they purchase items from a MAS. The contractor remits the IFF due to GSA, quarterly.

**21. Is there assistance for professional services?**

**Answer:** Yes, call or email our Customer Service Advocates, Tammy Lindsley at (253) 931-7627, [tam.lindsley@gsa.gov](mailto:tam.lindsley@gsa.gov) or Maureen Duckworth at (253) 931-7514, [maureen.duckworth@gsa.gov](mailto:maureen.duckworth@gsa.gov). Both of us can give advice but if you need someone to actually work the procurement for you please contact the National Customer Service Center at (800) 488-3111 and ask for Assisted Services.

**22. Who has control of the acquisition process?**

**Answer:** You do, when your contracting agency is using the Schedule Contract. We call this a Direct Acquisition as opposed to an Assisted Services Acquisition. In a Direct Acquisition, the agency controls the route of dissemination, length of time the RFQ is open and the time that it takes to evaluate the quotes. All evaluations are driven by the agency so award processing time is completely in your control. Agencies can add their own clauses as long as they do not conflict with any GSA clauses. Agencies often add security, options, extensions and payment clauses or more information, contact the National Customer Service Center at (800) 488-3111 and ask to speak to a Customer Service Advocate out of Region 10.

**23. Does this meet my competition requirements?**

**Answer:** Publicizing Contract Actions GSA Schedules have been synopsisized in [FedBizOpps](#) and satisfy the requirements of the Competition in Contracting Act (Pub. Law 98-369) and Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 5, Publicizing Contract Actions. Therefore, in general, competitive (fair opportunity) Schedule Orders and Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) are not required to be synopsisized in FedBizOpps. Two exceptions to this general exemption from publicizing Schedule actions are as follows:

- For any Schedule Order or Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold AND supported by a Limited Source Justification (LSJ), the action will be publicized in FedBizOpps along with the LSJ – EXCEPTION: if the LSJ is for a brand name restriction and,
- For a Schedule Order or BPA in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold AND supported by a brand name restricted LSJ, the LSJ will be posted on eBay together with the Request for Quotation.

#### 24. What is a Special Item Number (SIN) and how do you use it?

**Answer:** In the case of professional services, a Schedule is a general scope of services in a common grouping. Each Schedule is broken down into categories (Special Item Numbers) of specific scope (each is defined in eLibrary). Search [GSA eLibrary](#) (formerly Schedules e-Library) by Special Item Number (SIN), Contractor, Contract Number, Schedule Number, or Keywords. Once a Schedule is selected, a list of SINs will appear. Clicking on a SIN will then display the definition of the SIN. It is critical that the scope of the SIN fits the scope of the task order. More than one Schedule and/or SIN may be used for one task order.

- Clicking on a contractor name will then reveal detailed contractor information, including Internet and email addresses, if available. The email address will enable customers to send an email directly to the Schedule contractor to request a copy of the contractor's Schedule pricelist or any other contract information.

- Customers should consult the contractor's catalog/pricelist for more detailed ordering information, such as:

- Contract items awarded (labor categories)
  - Start and end dates for the contract (usually in 5 year increments)
  - Maximum order provisions;
  - Geographic coverage (delivery area);
  - Contract prices or discounts;
  - Quantity discounts;
  - Prompt payment terms;
  - Government purchase card terms;
  - Commercial delivery terms;
  - Expedited delivery;
  - Ordering address(es);
  - Payment address(es);
  - Warranty provisions;
  - Export packing charges;
  - Applicable terms and conditions of rental, maintenance, installation, and repair;
- and
- Environmental and energy efficiency.

